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CENTRAL FAX CENTERApplication No. 09/576,223
Reply to Office Action of October 6, 2005

JAN 06 2006

Docket No.: 20140-00238-US

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in this application.

BEST AVAILABLE COPYListing of the Claims:

1. (Presently amended) A digital file forming a contract comprising:

a header package having rules defining sealed packages produced by a sealing party, a body containing at least a portion of the content of the contract; and a validating signature generated from said rules and said body according to a first key belonging to a validating party; and

a sealing signature generated from said header package and said sealed packages according to a second key belonging to said sealing party.

2. (Previously presented) A digital file forming a contract according to claim 1 wherein said header package further comprises a unique header identifying a type of said sealed package and wherein said validating signature is generated from said rules, said body and said header.

3. (Previously presented) A digital file forming a contract according to claim 1 wherein said sealed package comprises a unique number generated by said sealing party and said sealing signature is generated from said header package, any of said sealed packages and said unique number.

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4. (Previously presented) A digital file according to claim 1 wherein said rules define one or more unsealed packages to be included in said sealed package, said body comprises a HTML file and one of the unsealed packages defined in the rules contains data for a field in the HTML file.

5. (Previously presented) A digital file according to claim 1 wherein said rules comprise a URL corresponding to the location for which each sealed package to be included in the contract can be obtained.

6. (Previously presented) A digital contract according to claim 5 wherein said URL is a CGI script for commanding a remote server to generate said sealed package.

7. (Previously presented) A digital contract according to claim 5 wherein said URL identifies the location of said sealed package.

8. (Currently amended) A contract management apparatus for validating a digital file const contract, said digital file having a header package which includes rules defining sealed packages, a body containing at least a portion of the contract, and a validating signature, comprising:

means for reading said rules and for identifying a validating party and a sealing party which created a sealed file of said contract;

first means for obtaining a first key belonging to said validating party cooperable with said validating signature generated from said rules and body to validate said header package;

second means for obtaining a second key belonging to said-sea sealing party cooperable with said sealing signature to validate said contract; and

means for iteratively validating any sealed packages contained in said contract using said second key and sealing signature.

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9. (Previously presented) A contract management apparatus as claimed in claim 8 wherein said iterative validating means returns any data stored in said sealed packages.

10. (Previously presented) The contract management apparatus of claim 9 further comprising means for displaying said body contents and said returned data.

11. (Previously presented) A contract management apparatus for generating a digital file constituting a contract comprising:

means for obtaining a header package for said contract;

means for reading rules defining sealed data packages, and for identifying a sealing party and any sealed packages to be included in said contract;

means for obtaining said identified sealed packages;

means for generating a sealing signature from said header package and any of said sealed packages according to a first key belonging to said sealing party; and means for assembling said header package, sealed packages and said sealing signature into said digital file constituting a contract.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously presented) The contract management apparatus of claim 8, including one of a smartcard, a personal digital assistant, a personal computer, a terminal or an embedded system.

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14. (Currently amended) A computer product for storing instructions which are executed by a computer to validate a digital file having a header package which includes rules defining sealed packages, a body containing at least a portion of a contract and a validating signature, comprising:

reading said digital file and identifying a validating party and a sealing party which created a sealed package of said contract;

deriving a first key belonging to a validating party;

validating said header package using said first key and said validating signature;

deriving a second key belonging to said sealing party;

a sealing signature from said header package; and

validating said digital file using said second key and said sealing signature.

15. (Previously presented) The computer product according to claim 14, further comprising instructions for deriving said sealing signature from a unique number contained in said header package.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A computer product for storing instructions for a computer to execute the steps of:

storing rules to describe a data package;

creating from said rules a data package containing a digital data file; merging said rules and said data package into a merged file;

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creating a package validity signature from said merged file to prevent unauthorized use of said digital file; and

generating a unique number identifying said digital file;

merging said package validity signature, said merged file and said unique number;
creating a sealing signature from said merged files; and

sealing said merged files with said sealing signature to produce a sealed package.

19. (Previously presented) A computer product according to claim 18 wherein said rules comprises a plurality of elements which point to a location on said computer containing a required package.

20. (Previously presented) The computer product according to claim 19 wherein said rules define a sealing signature for said sealed package.

21. (Previously presented) The computer product according to claim 18 wherein said merged files are compressed as a single file.